

THE MARYLAND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES – JULY 17, 2002

Chairman Tim Lambert called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

Approval for Minutes from June 2002 Meeting

- June meeting minutes approved without correction.

WHS Administration Program Report

- Presentation by Mr. Mark Hoffman, Associate Director
- Introduction of staff members [Attachment A]:
 - 1) Ms. Monica Powell, Permits Coordinator
 - 2) Ms. Shirley Brown, Administrative Officer
 - 3) Ms. Dorothy Crowner, Administrative Officer
 - 4) Ms. Mary Goldie, Administrative Officer
- Administration Program
 - 1) Mission: Managing the budget for the Wildlife and Heritage Service (WHS).
 - 2) Budget: Currently the WHS has an 8 million dollar budget. Administration Program urges the importance of closing out the year in the black.
 - 3) Chart of Accounts: We have a variety of codes to use, which are important to the auditing system for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Department of Internal Revenue. On an annual basis, the Legislative System audits the Department.
 - 4) Log Letters and Director's Correspondence: Provide responses for the Governor regarding wildlife issues.
 - 5) Federal Aid Coordination
 - (a) We deal with USFWS on our federal aid grants
 - (b) New grant opportunities:
 - (i) Wildlife Conservation and Restoration which amounts to 600,000 dollars
 - (ii) State Wildlife Grants Program
 - (iii) These funds will be used to carry out the Wildlife Conservation Mission
 - 6) Legislation: Prepares all WHS bill reports, maintains fiscal notes, tracks our legislation process, and coordinates closely with the legislative staff for the Secretary.
 - 7) Regulations: The lead on regulations. Reviews all regulations such as, hunting seasons, bag limits, hunting guides, etc.
- Permit Coordinator, Ms. Monica Powell
 - 1) Coordinates the permitting process for WHS
 - 2) Permit types include: Captive Reptile and Amphibian, Endangered Species, Scientific Collecting, Falconry, Fur Dealer, Game Husbandry, Retriever Training, Master Hunting Guide, Rehabilitator, Rabies Vector Species Rehab, Taxidermy, Non-Resident Trapping, Waterfowl Processing Operator, Wildlife Control Cooperator, and Shoreline and Duck Blind Site License.
 - 3) Questions and Answers
 - (a) Commissioner Lamp asked if the Wildlife Control Cooperator Permit requires anyone to demonstrate any efficiency. No, they are only required to complete an application and indicate on that application what species they would like to operator for.
- Administrative Officer, Ms. Shirley Brown
 - 1) Personnel issues including classified employees, benefits, assignments outside the job, and educational requirements.
 - 2) Maintains vehicle maintenance and fuel requirements for WHS.
 - 3) Insurance Coordinator
 - 4) Facility Management: Making sure that the offices and housing passes inspection.
 - 5) Floor Warden: The last person out in case of emergency.
 - 6) Safety Management: Maintains accident reports
 - 7) Maintains Inventory to ensure WHS complies with State regulations and Federal regulations.
- Administrative Officer, Ms. Dorothy Crowner

- 1) Maintains contractual employment, which includes seasonal and long-term contracts.
- 2) Procurement involves service contracts and exempt contracts
- 3) Maintains service and communication for the unit's telephone system.
- 4) Handles cash transaction for the unit.
- 5) Maintains corporate cards log report for WHS.
- 6) Maintains financial statements with the assistance of Associate Director Mark Hoffman.
- Administrative Officer, Ms. Mary Goldie
 - 1) Maintains spreadsheet management
 - 2) Compiles data from field offices for the monthly report.
 - 3) Maintains Out-of-State travel arrangements for WHS.
 - 4) Handles some of the Director's correspondence.
 - 5) Processes federal aid grants.
 - 6) Questions and Answers
 - (a) Director Peditto asked if the Commission receives the monthly report. No, it does not at this time. Commission agreed that they would be interested in having WHS Monthly Report.
 - (b) Director Peditto asked, with the blessing of the Commission, to add the Wildlife Advisory Commission (WAC) minutes to the DNR Website in order for the public to learn more about the activities of the WAC.
 - (c) Commissioner Dollar asked what is the driving force behind that request. It is part of the Secretary's desire to be more open and inclusive with what we do and, our Department's interest in better serving the public. This decision will be added to the August Agenda.

Introduction

- Mr. Larry Hindman introduced Mr. Ladd Johnson, former Chairman of the Waterfowl Advisory Commission.
 - 1) Served as Chairman for more than ten years.
 - 2) Mr. Hindman presented a certificate for Mr. Johnson's service to the Department.

Draft Mute Swan Plan

- Presentation by Mr. Larry Hindman, Waterfowl Project Manager
- Handed out Draft Mute Swan Plan [Attachment B]
- Management Goal is to manage the mute swan population in Maryland, at a level that minimizes the impacts on native wildlife and their habitats, and minimizes the conflicts with humans.
- Management Objectives are as follows: Develop program of public outreach; exclude or remove mute swans from the "Swan Free Zone"; continue to monitor the size and distribution of the population and evaluate the effectiveness of the management plan; prevent the release or escape of captive mute swans into the wild; reduce the conflicts between mute swans and people; conduct additional research that will increase understanding of the role of mute swans in the Chesapeake Bay; and, reduce the mute swan population to protect, restore and enhance the Bay's living resources.
- Public Comment for 60 days beginning on Thursday July 18, 2002 with a press release announcement.
- Question and Answers
 - 1) Commissioner Lamp asked for clarification on "Swan Free Zone" whether this means removal of swans from all public wetlands.
 - (a) We would remove mute swans from the "Swan Free Zone," for example, Wildlife Management Areas, which are established for protection of native wildlife species.
 - (b) Reminded the Commission that mute swans prevent native waterfowl from nesting and feeding.
 - 2) Commissioner Freeland asked to discuss the biology of mute swans.
 - (a) Mute swans are pretty sedentary and don't move much.
 - (i) Mostly live within 30 miles of where they are born.
 - (ii) Mute swans are spreading out into the Patuxent River. For example, from the year 2000 to 2002, the number of estimated nests increased from 4 to 20 nests.
 - (iii) If funded, part of this research will get better information on the dispersal.
 - (iv) 100's of acres of the Chesapeake Bay Grasses have been destroyed.
 - (v) Generally do not nest until three years of age.
 - (vi) The young stay with parents during the brood rearing period.

- (vii) The larger groups concentrate on the grasses.
 - a. Barren Island is the largest area, which provided a sanctuary for the swans.
 - b. 600-1000 mute swans are located at Barren Island.
- 3) Commissioner Dollar asked about what coordination there has been between Virginia Institute for Marine Science (VIMS) and DNR.
 - (a) We have coordination with Mike Naylor and USFWS field offices.
 - (i) Mike Naylor's mapping will be used to define the "Swan Free Zone" for DNR.
 - (ii) Six areas provided by SAV experts are mapped.
 - (iii) Experts that are researching bay grasses are concerned about mute swans.
 - (b) Ms. Edith Thompson added that the Chesapeake Bay Program have identified six exotic species (includes mute swans).
 - (c) Commissioner Dollar encouraged the Department to develop "Memorandum of Understanding."
 - (i) A joint statement of impacts that mute swans have on SAV.
 - (ii) Suggested that in doing so, it would go a long way to help educate the public.
 - (iii) Discussion ensued regarding the communication challenges on the mute swan plan.
 - (iv) DNR has been talking about mute swans for many, many years. This is a problem and we are the agency to solve it. We are not in a position to wait for other organizations. The public process will help us solve the information gaps.
 - (v) Mr. Ladd Johnson added USFWS has zero tolerance policy for mute swans on federal lands.
- Motion
 - 1) Commissioner Freeland moved that the Commission endorse the Mute Swan Draft Plan that had been presented.
 - (a) Commissioner Adams seconded that motion.
 - (b) Commissioner Lamp stated that he had not read the plan. He suggested that the Commission should read the plan before we vote.
 - (c) Discussion ensued regarding reading the plan before voting. The plan had been presented to the Commission and the public.
 - 2) Commissioners decided to keep the motion still on the table.
 - (a) Chairman Lambert asked all those in favor endorsing the Mute Swan Draft Report say "I."
 - (b) Commissioner King provided his affirmative vote to Chairman Lambert before leaving the meeting. The motion was adopted.
 - (c) Commissioner Lamp stated "Abstained strictly"; he felt an obligation to the public to read the plan first.

Atlantic Population (AP) Migratory Canada Geese Status Report

- Presentation by Mr. Bill Harvey, Game Bird Manager
- History:
 - 1) Mr. Bill Harvey has participated in the breeding survey in Northern Quebec since 1993.
 - 2) The AP survey replaced the Mid-Winter survey as the primary tracking measure for the population.
- There are two observers for this survey.
 - 1) Mr. Bill Harvey is the U.S. observer, who also compiled the numbers and completed the report.
 - 2) The Canadian Wildlife provided another observer.
 - 3) This is a joint project of the Atlantic Flyway states, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Canadian Wildlife Service.
- Most AP Migratory Canada Geese nest in Northern Quebec and Ungava Peninsula (Ungava Bay is located on the east and Hudson Bay is located on the west).
- Boreal Forest
 - 1) 1st area of survey is a transitional area between Boreal Forest and Tundra.
 - 2) 2nd area of survey is the Tundra, with the largest population of geese found along the Ungava Bay and Hudson Bay.
 - 3) We fly the same transects using GPS system, flying at 100 feet above the ground at 90 knots (100mph).
 - 4) Each observer records the number of geese along with other waterfowl.
 - (a) Records 200 meters on either side of the plane equaling 400 meters.
 - (b) Estimate of how many pairs and groups.

- AP Survey Procedures
 - 1) Time to be there is in mid-incubation period.
 - 2) All nest within 3 to 4 days of each other.
 - 3) Takes about 2 weeks to survey.
 - 4) Arrive on the breeding grounds in Mid May.
 - 5) When the ground thaws they nest.
- The difference between a good and bad spring in terms of hatching
 - 1) 2-3 weeks of delayed melting causes a bad year.
 - (a) This year a lot of ice and very cold.
 - (b) Not many nests this year.
 - 2) A good year, no snow and little ice.
 - 3) Ungava Bay Coast still had plenty of snow.
 - 4) Hudson Bay Coast wasn't much better.
- The survey involves the following information: Pairs, Single Geese, and Groups of Geese.
- Tracking the AP Population
 - 1) Pairs
 - (a) Estimated in 2002 - 165,000 pairs vs. last year 147,000.
 - (b) Expected to see more breeding pairs this year given good production in recent years.
 - (c) Breeding stock very healthy.
 - (d) Far better shape then the mid 1990s.
 - 2) We estimated the total number of geese in Northern Quebec.
 - (a) This includes birds other than AP Geese.
 - (b) The total population has increased over the last 6 or 7 years.
 - 3) Since 1996 people on the ground conduct studies.
 - (a) On June 10, 2002 studied clutch size.
 - (i) Average 3 eggs per nest. In a good year around 5 eggs per nest.
 - (ii) Nesting success is low and overall poor.
 - (b) The population is in good shape, but not many goslings for this year.

Waterfowl Season Proposals

- Presentation by Mr. Larry Hindman and Mr. Bill Harvey
- Hand outs [Attachments C and D]
- We do not have the federal frameworks yet.
- Atlantic Flyway Council (AFC) meets next week.
- They are sideboards which are establish by USFWS
 - 1) Provide us a window with earliest and latest dates.
 - 2) Waterfowl season closed on Sunday by the federal requirements for the State of Maryland and 9 other states.
- Duck habitat not favorable
 - 1) Eastern production areas had a good year.
 - 2) Overall population did not reflect poor conditions.
 - 3) Flyway Council has been requesting for relaxation in the seasons and Maryland supported that approach.
- Canvasback was down a little this year.
 - 1) Harvest was low.
 - 2) Preliminary packet suggested a 20-day season.
- Sea Duck Season with 107 days and with the same proposal as last year.
- AP Canada Goose Season with 30 days, possibly some liberalization.
- Resident Canada Goose with a 70-day season.
 - 1) We support a general depredation order to eliminate the need for federal and state permit.
 - 2) We also support hunting in August and September, where crops have been manipulated for doves.
- Questions and Answers
 - 1) Commissioner Freeland asked if there is a permit available to farmers to take Resident Canada Geese.
 - (a) There is a process for applying which is a lengthy and burdensome task.
 - (b) The farmers apply through the USFWS in New Hampshire.

- 2) Commissioner Adams asked why not increase the bag limits for resident Canada geese.
 - (a) The Drafted Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) supported no bag limit.
 - (b) Boundary-line drawn to protect AP Migratory Geese.
 - (c) EIS proposal for opening the season on Resident Canada Geese in August.
- Information on Brant is limited and we are guessing that the conditions are good in the spring.
- Greater Snow Geese with 107-day season.
 - 1) Except for the first week of deer firearm season.
 - 2) New Snow Geese Hunting Regulation provided by the USFWS.
 - (a) Opportunity for usage of unplug-shotguns and electric calling in portions of snow geese season, when other waterfowl seasons are closed.
 - (b) Conservation Order would allow spring hunting with unplug-shotguns and electric calls.
 - (c) The goal is to increase the harvest of greater snow geese with a 15 per day bag limit.
- Questions and Answers
 - 1) Commissioner Freeland asked if we need a federal permit to hunt greater snow geese.
 - (a) The requirements are as follows: hunting license, and federal and state migratory stamps.
 - 2) Commissioner Freeland asked for the eastern resident goose season.
 - (a) The statewide eastern zone dates are September 2 – September 14.
 - (b) The western zone goes a little later.
 - 3) Clarification on the process for public comments.
 - (a) On August 19th, there will be a public meeting.
 - (b) Bring to the Commission another set of recommendations.
 - (c) On-line comments and letters will be received for a 30-day period.

State Forest and Park Service Update

- Presentation by Mr. Bob Beckett, Chief of State Forest and Park Service (SFSP)
- Merkle National Resources Management Area (NRMA) received a call regarding releasing resident goose goslings. Request was denied.
- Meadow Mount Campground: Nuisance bear activity continues. Rangers responded to two bears. Stepped up information and education.
- Dan's Mountain State Park: Installed bear resistant dumpster. Deer enclosure to determine the extent of deer browsing.
- Western Maryland Rail Trail had a number of bear sightings by trail users.
- Request was made for the Commission to receive All Access Passes courtesy of the Superintendent Rick Barton.
 - 1) Must use it by December 31, 2002.
 - (a) Free day admission for you and a guest in your vehicle.
 - (b) Free camping on available basis (does not include free cabins).
 - (c) Free boat launching, except for Deep Creek Lake and Jennings Reservoir.
 - (d) 10% discount.
 - 2) Commissioner Adams indicated that he was concerned about the criticism that the Commission may receive from the public regarding this type of treatment.
 - (a) This is a personal decision to accept the pass.
 - (b) The purpose for the complimentary pass is to allow feedback on the facilities and services.

Natural Resources Police Update

- Presentation by Sergeant Richardson
- NRP June Monthly Report [Attachment E]
 - 1) Drowning all over the state
 - (a) Getting intoxicated boaters off the waters.
 - (b) Patrolling SAV areas and keeping hydraulic clammers off of SAV's.
 - 2) New limits on hard crabs, increase to 5 ¼ inches
 - (a) Starts August 1, 2002
 - (b) Most restrictive of any east coast state.
 - 3) Black bear incident in Western Maryland
 - 4) Snake-head Fish

- (a) Investigated where the fish originally came from.
 - (b) Release of 1 – 2 fish two years ago.
- Questions and Answers
 - 1) Director Peditto asked under what authority would they have been charged.
 - (a) Under the Fisheries Regulations and currently Fisheries Service is working on that.

MSA Update

- No report

Maryland Farm Bureau Report

- No report
- Mr. Peditto added that Jessica Fritz will no longer represent the Farm Bureau and they are currently searching for a replacement.

Old Business

- Commissioner Lamp asked if there would be opportunity to review the outfitters packet that was handed out last time and do we require the outfitters to submit a monthly report with the names and license numbers of the hunters.
 - 1) The current procedure requires the outfitter to send a monthly report with information regarding number of species they killed.
 - 2) We have the license numbers in the Customer Oriented Information Network (COIN) system that is functional.

New Business

- Chairman Lambert mentioned that Mr. Bob Degrooth would like to give a 45-minute presentation on the habitat of Forest Fragmentation.
 - 1) Looking at the agenda this year, it seems that the Commission does not have the time. Therefore, with the Commission's permission, Chairman Lambert would like to defer the presentation until next year.
 - (a) Commissioners would like to hear the presentation, however, can Mr. Degrooth shorten the length of time to present.
 - (b) Mr. Peditto stated as part of the Heritage Update, the Commission would receive information on the habitat of Forest Fragmentation.
 - (c) Chairman Lambert will send him confirmation of a 15-minute presentation.
- Commissioner Lamp indicated a successful Black Bear Conservation Fund with the help of Bob Beyer and Karina Blizzard.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Attendance

Members:	T. Lambert, C. Dollar, G. Fratz, W. Freeland, M. King, J. Lamp, L. Adams, C. Garner
Guests:	
Staff:	B. Beckett, K. Blizzard, S. Brown, D. Crouner, M. Goldie, L. Hindman, M. Hoffman, B. King, P. Peditto, M. Powell, S. Richardson, T. Spencer, E. Thompson, L. Wiley
Absent:	R. Gregory, K. Jones